

SEPTEMBER 1947

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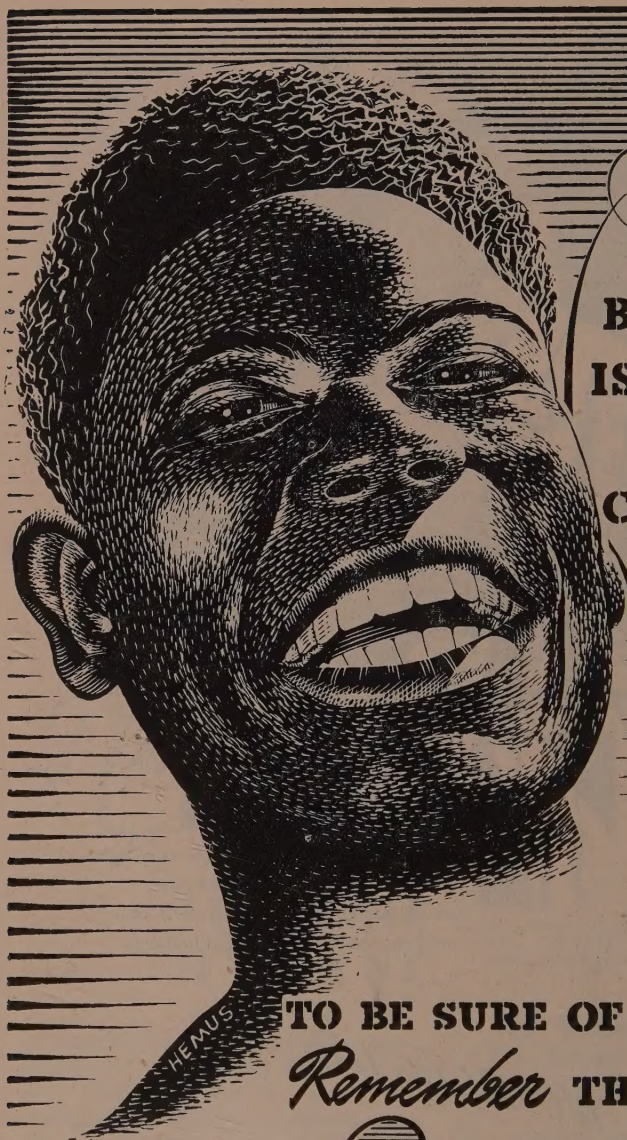
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the garden seemed enchanted ; she  
waited by the dark tree, secure in beauty,  
until she heard the expected footstep.

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# THEATRE WORLD



*Houston-Rogers*

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and  
Lewis Casson**

Starring in J. B. Priestley's new play, *The Linden Tree*, Dame Sybil Thorndike and Sir Lewis Casson give brilliant performances as a Professor of History and his wife. *The Linden Tree*, hailed as one of Mr. Priestley's best plays, will be featured in pictures in our next issue.

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# Theatre World

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Edited by Frances Stephens

## September 1947

THE Edinburgh Festival opened on 25th August and from early impressions it would seem that the season will be a great success and that the faith and courage of those responsible for the idea, particularly Rudolf Bing, have been more than justified. This year there are certain to be growing pains, but the 1948 Festival will take its place as a great International Event, more than worthy of the Salzburg tradition, which undoubtedly was its inspiration. The beautiful city is full to capacity and every available hall and theatre is being used to stage music, opera, ballet and drama. The accent is rather on music than drama and the Glyndebourne Opera Company are presenting Verdi's *Macbeth* and Mozart's *Le Nozze de Figaro*. Sadler's Wells Ballet Company are presenting *The Sleeping Beauty* and the Old Vic Theatre Company *Richard II* and *The Taming of the Shrew*. Interesting visitors from abroad are Louis Jouvet's company from the Theatre de l'Athénée in Molière's *L'Ecole des Femmes* and Jean Giraudoux's *Ondine*.

Here in London it is good to know that the annual Theatrical Garden Party is to be held again, for the first time since the war began. It will be held at the Oval on 9th September, augmented by a cricket match between an Old Empire XI and a Stage XI, the latter being selected from Mervyn Blake, Kenneth Buckley, Anthony Bushell, Bernard Gordon, MacDonald Helby, Trevor Howard, Frank Lawton, Jack Livesey, Roger Livesey, Lauri Lupino Lane, Garry Marsh, Clifford Mollison, Abraham Sofaer, Donald Strachan, E. Underdown and G. Powell. Jack Hobbs will umpire. Judging by the number of attractions which have been arranged, with

## Over the Footlights

many famous stars taking part, this year's Garden Party will be among the best. The proceeds are, of course, in aid of The Actors' Orphanage and admission tickets will be 3/- before the day and 5/- on the day. The cricket match will start at 11.30, the Garden Party at 2.

A brilliant summer, so welcome, of course, in all other ways, has discouraged theatre going, and apart from the half-dozen or so brilliant successes, West End shows have suffered a marked falling off. However, the autumn season is not far off and we can look forward to some interesting new plays. The Old Vic Company will open at the New Theatre on 4th November and full details will be given next month, when we shall no doubt have news of the Sadler's Wells Ballet's new season at Covent Garden. *Perchance to Dream* ends its run at the Hippodrome during October and will be followed by a new musical show starring Pat Kirkwood and Vic Oliver. Among new plays opening in the next few weeks will be Roland Pertwee's *School for Spinsters*, which succeeds *The Sleeping Clergyman* at the Criterion.

The present season of ballet at Covent Garden which is being given by the Original Ballet Russe, has been extended by one week and will not now finish until 13th September. An interesting feature of the last week will be two new ballets, *Silver Birch* and *Piccoli*, which have not been seen in this country before.

Plays produced too late for review in this issue include *Dr. Angelus* (Phoenix), *The Linden Tree* (Duchess), *The Bride Goes West* (Fortune), *Separate Rooms* (Strand), and *The Chiltern Hundreds* (Vaudeville).

F.S.

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# New Shows of the Month

"Romeo and Juliet"—Boltons, July 7th.

"The Voice of the Turtle"—Piccadilly, July 9th.

"The Nightingale"—Princes, July 15th.

"Trespass"—Globe, July 16th.

"Men without Shadows" and "The Respectable Prostitute"—Lyric, Hammersmith, July 17th.

"A Midsummer Night's Dream"—Open Air Theatre, July 22nd.

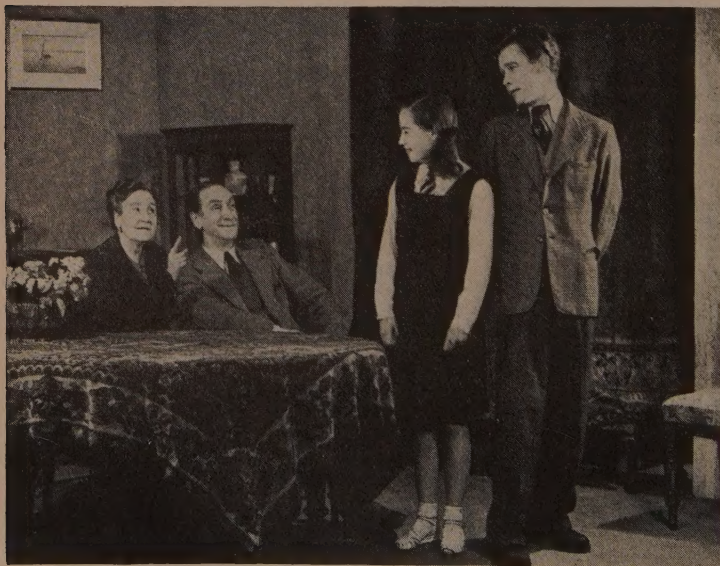
"Peace in Our Time"—Lyric, July 22nd.

## "Romeo and Juliet"

THIS small but vital theatre is rounding off a highly creditable season of new plays with a production of *Romeo and Juliet* calculated to enhance a rapidly growing reputation for good work. It is not so long since "T.R.T." gave a fine production of *Romeo and Juliet* at King's Theatre, Hammersmith, notable for Renee Asherson's performance as Juliet. The present one, less ambitious in aim, is not so high in achievement, but it is a worthy successor to that happy memory. The acting area at Boltons is small and the director, John Wyse, has produced without attempting novelty, sensibly allowing the poet to speak for himself. We see the actors plainly and as plainly hear and overhear every speech and note the overtones. The

heightened dramatic tension in the second half of the play brings excellent response from the company. Isobel Dean, a highly intelligent as well as imaginatively passionate Juliet, is much stronger in the second half. The more the play demands, the better she responds with a well-controlled amplitude of feeling from a bounty seeming "as boundless as the sea." One may not admit the necessity of calling on Australia for a Romeo, but one can admit that Allan Cuthbertson is agreeable and sufficient. Truly, Romeo, Mercutio and Benvolio are three well-matched companions and it is interesting to imagine the adventures of the first befalling either of the other two. William Squire makes Benvolio keen and ardent, a very real character. His manner of telling Romeo that Mercutio is dead has genuine feeling, and puts a notch in memory. John Witty's Mercutio is rather a parched pea, but the manner of his death redeems all as so often it has to do in this part. Shakespeare's Mercutio was a lover of words and fantastic images. It does not follow that he was highly excitable. Your sententious man values his phrases too highly to gabble them.

Peter Madren makes a beautiful study of Friar Laurence and speaks as a holy man, full of sympathy and learning. Never tedious. Like the nurse, "I could have stayed all the night to hear good counsel" so delivered.



A scene from *Fly Away Peter*, the new comedy by A. P. Dearsley which opened at the St. James's Theatre on August 12th. A review of the play was included in our June issue during its run at the King's, Hammersmith. In the picture are seen Madoline Thomas and J. H. Roberts as Mr. and Mrs. Hapgood and Margaret Barton as Myra, their youngest child, and Peter Hammond as Myra's self-conscious boy friend, in an amusing moment from this story of family life in Streatham.

Picture by

Robin Adler



John Vickers

Frances Day as Pamela Barry and Daphne Barker as Linda Roberts in Leigh Stafford's presentation of *Separate Rooms* which opened at the Strand Theatre on 21st August, too late for review in this issue.



Houston-Rogers

Twenty-year-old Sonya Hana, clever leading dancer of *The Nightingale*, Lee Ephraim's new musical at the Princes Theatre. Miss Hana, who was trained by Lydia Kyasht, has made a big impression.

Eileen Thorndike's performance as that innocent old bawd is very pleasant and perhaps as near a perfect rendering as one can hope to see. The open brawls between the Montagues and Capulets are capably quelled by Reginald Jarman, who presents a born ruler who would have been Prince of Verona by force of personality if not by birth. There is no better play and the Boltions have not failed at interpretation yet.

H.G.M.

### "The Voice of the Turtle"

IT will be a source of astonishment to many people over here why this comedy, even though it has its moments, should have enjoyed such a phenomenal run in New York. We can assume, of course, that John van Druten wrote it specifically for American audiences and perhaps he is psychologist enough not to be surprised that its reception over here was far from ecstatic.

This writer, while admiring the skill with which Margaret Sullavan tackled her part, found Sally Middleton an irritating mixture of puerility and sex-consciousness. Wendell Corey and Audrey Christie completed a brilliant trio and, considering that these three were the entire company, all praise is due to them. But the story of the struggling actress who on the rebound from a love affair finds herself unexpectedly

entertaining a stray Army Officer—he obligingly falling in love with her—is far too thin to support three acts and would not have done so but for the aforementioned outstanding acting and the big part played by an exceedingly clever stage set.

F.S.

(*The Voice of the Turtle* was withdrawn on 30th August.)

### "The Nightingale"

IN this year of grace it is a tough problem for any new English musical to hold its own in London, with the American successes, *Oklahoma!* and *Annie, Get Your Gun*, just around the corner. Lee Ephraim's new show at the Princes is no doubt colourful and romantic enough to draw its audiences, but it cannot be claimed that Kennedy Russell's music has inspiration or even sufficient individuality to leap to the mind. Nor is there anything outstanding in the book and lyrics by Michael Martin-Harvey and Sax Rohmer, for this up-to-date version of the old fairy story about the Chinese Emperor and the nightingale, falls between two stools, neither retaining the other-worldly atmosphere of the fairy tale nor achieving the pithiness of a modern satire.

However, Jack Hulbert is to be congratulated on a slick and lavish production. The costumes and scenery by Berkeley

Sutcliffe, though somewhat nebulous as to their origin, are certainly magnificently executed. And the real triumph of the piece was to have brought over from America lovely Mimi Benzell, whose voice is as beautiful as any nightingale's. John Westbrook is a handsome young Emperor who does not sing, and Fabia Drake lifts the role of the Dowager Empress to a high level.

One of the most pleasing aspects of the show is Anthony Burke's choreography and Sonya Haná and Norman Thompson, premier dancers, are in fine form.

F.S.

## "Trespass"

**T**HERE seem to be two ways of tackling a ghost thriller, whether drama or comedy; one being to stick to the book of known phenomena as closely as Noel Coward did in his inimitable *Blithe Spirit* or as was done in the more recent *The Poltergeist*, or to let the imagination sweep far into the realms of the unknown and produce any and every effect to make the flesh creep.

Mr. Williams sets his play in the present time and tries to make our flesh creep by announcing through Christine (Françoise Rosay) in the presence of a noted scientist interested in psychical research, that if the ghost materialises he will be the first spirit back from the grave. Even those moderately interested in the subject will surely have heard of Sir William Crookes and Sir Oliver Lodge! Perhaps it was this slight lack of authenticity that made *Trespass* a ghost story without the creeps, and left us with the feeling that the only character worth knowing would have been the villainous ghost himself, who however remained a wraith to the outward eye to the end. There was, however, a delightful portrayal of a fake medium by Marjorie Rhodes and some interesting moments from Emyln Williams as a harmless Welshman posing as an Italian psychic. This loquacious gentleman is proved to be a genuine medium, scared of his gift, as well he might be considering his untimely end. Françoise Rosay, Leon Quartermaine and Gladys Henson we felt were wasted in their parts, but they gave of their excellent best, as did Roddy Hughes, Daphne Arthur, Raymond Westwell and Frances Bates, who completed the cast.

F.S.

## "Men Without Shadows" and "The Respectable Prostitute"

**T**HESE two Sartre plays formed an interesting double programme at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith, and the occasion for some brilliant acting. But whether they can be called "theatre" in the true sense is a moot point. The first play, with the background of the Resistance Movement in France, is virtually without

action. Whether the characters are merely waiting for the inevitable or suffering that inevitable in another room in the shape of physical torture, sadistically administered in gruesome detail in full view of the audience, the overall effect is static. Quite obviously Sartre is using this theme of personal suffering to demonstrate his philosophy and, taken that way, the work is interesting to the connoisseur.

The second play is a light-hearted satire, but still with the same philosophy underlying. The author's shafts at the modern American outlook are poison-tipped but very amusing; the theme of the hunted Negro and the prostitute with a heart of gold illuminating and penetrating. Mary Morris, Aubrey Woods, John Byron, Lyn Evans, Hector Macgregor and David Markham in the first play and Betty Ann Davies, Hugh Griffith, Orlando Martins and David Markham in the second, were outstanding.

F.S.

## "A Midsummer Night's Dream"

**A** MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM is the established favourite in our rather limited English open air repertory and the present production maintains that position. Mendelssohn's music sounds very delightful in Queen Mary's Gardens and the ballet (how one thing leads to another) is quite pretty. Paul Hansard is an agreeable Oberon, to watch and to listen to. Yvonne Forster as Hermia and Anne Brooke as Helena have charm, intelligence and verve; a combination of qualities not usually found in the portrayal of these Athenian maidens. The rude mechanicals are well up to established standard. Robert Atkins' production is sound, simple and effective. His performance as Nick Bottom is inclined to overlap a little, but is extremely enjoyable. The amplification arrangements seem to be perfect.

H.G.M.

## "Peace In Our Time"

**S**ETTING himself the task of portraying this country as it might have been if Hitler had invaded in 1940, Mr. Coward gives us a workmanlike and convincing picture of London under the Germans. His achievement in holding our interest throughout is the more remarkable because the entire action passes in the Saloon Bar of a Chelsea public house, and also because, living in the perpetual crisis of 1947, it is not easy to be wildly enthusiastic about the might-have-been of seven years ago.

The great triumph for the author is that the people who wander in and out of The Shy Gazelle are for us real and living characters. It becomes a matter of great importance how they will react to the increasing pressure of the Gestapo. In the very long cast each character has his own particular niche and long before the end of

(Continued on page 10)

# Original Ballet Russe

OL. WASSILY DE BASIL has brought Original Ballet back to Covent Garden to revive some of the war glories of the Ballet. Riabouchinska and Lichine appeared as guest artists for the first two weeks, before leaving to fulfil contracts in South America. They were only two dancers to touch that pre-standard for which the company is so famous. The other artists were either efficient newcomers or dancers who took secondary notice when the troupe was in its heyday, in casts adorned by Nilova, Baronova, Ivanova, Massine and Shabalevsky.

*Graduation Ball*, Lichine's seven year frolic, set in a fashionable dance academy, is the only ballet the company has so far performed in London. Riabouchinska and Lichine gave delightful youthful performances as the high school girl and the poet, in romantic contrast to the comedy supplied by Ivan Taras and Pauline in *Wis*, as the general and the head-dress. Genevieve Guillin and Renée Maistre entered into pirouette competition that drew wild applause and proved that the younger members of the company have fully mastered their technical A.B.C. Nicholas Poff's *Drummer* promises an unforgettable scene, which will go



OLGA MOROSOVA and  
VLADIMIR DIKOULOVSKY

Below :

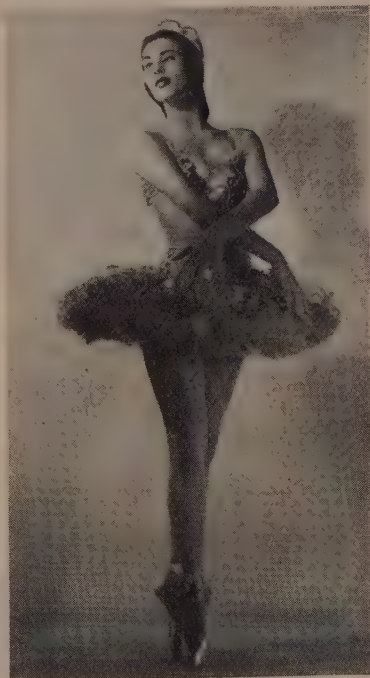
HELEN KOMAROVA



MOUSSIA LARKINA

Below :

BARBARA LLOYD



down in ballet history as perfection in miniature. The sweeping Strauss waltzes and the nostalgic flavour of Old Vienna will ensure long life for this ballet.

Of the revivals, *The Prodigal Son* has proved the most satisfying, due to a remarkable performance in the title-role by Roman Jasinsky, and some fine corps de ballet work in the grouping, conceived with architectural simplicity and effectiveness by Lichine. The human channel down which the Siren pours the wine to the Prodigal Son's lips, was magnificently constructed. The quiet close of the ballet when the son is received into the bosom of his family was magnificently performed. The company excels in moments of sentiment. The high-spot of *Scheherazade* was not the orgy, but Helene Komarova, as the sinning Zobeide, begging for mercy. Otherwise this glamorous Bakst melodrama does not appear to wear too well and the colours seem to have faded a little with the passing of the years.

Some of the other revivals did not equal, let alone eclipse, the magnificent De Basil performances of the past. In *Le Beau Danube* we missed the delicious sauciness of Danilova; no one in the world can shake a skirt as she does. In *Prince Igor* all the barbarism was missing. As the cymbals clashed in the orchestra we expected leaping archers throwing bows into the air and stirring the house to a frenzy

of enthusiasm. The present version is only luke-warm; it needs production as dynamic as the Borodin score. Gontcharova's glittering décor still makes a visit to *Le Coq D'Or* worth while; Dokoudovsky's elevation in *Blue Bird* makes *Aurora's Wedding* a "must," but the rest of the ballets in the repertoire are too sadly reminiscent of greater days to make them particularly happy experiences now.

### "Peace In Our Time" (Continued)

the first Act we realise that this is where Noel Coward scores when he strikes a patriotic note.

We remember especially Bernard Lee and Beatrice Varley as the publican, Fred Shattock, and his wife, the former expressing to perfection the calm way in which most Englishmen would hope to face enemy occupation. Elspeth March brings dignity to the part of Janet Braid, another staunch Englishwoman, and Maureen Pryor as the Shattocks' daughter, who is eventually tortured to death by the Gestapo as a member of the Resistance Movement, gives a sympathetic performance. Olaf Pooley is sinister enough as the one near-collaborator among the clients of The Shy Gazelle and Ralph Michael is most convincing as the glib German official, anxious to cause no offence in the beginning, but utterly ruthless later when resistance grows. F.S.

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*Alice: I'm not going to be married tomorrow.*

A scene in Act II showing Faith Brook as Alice Langdon and Allan Jeayes as Senator Ellsworth Langdon.

## “*Deep are the Roots*” AT WYNDHAM'S THEATRE

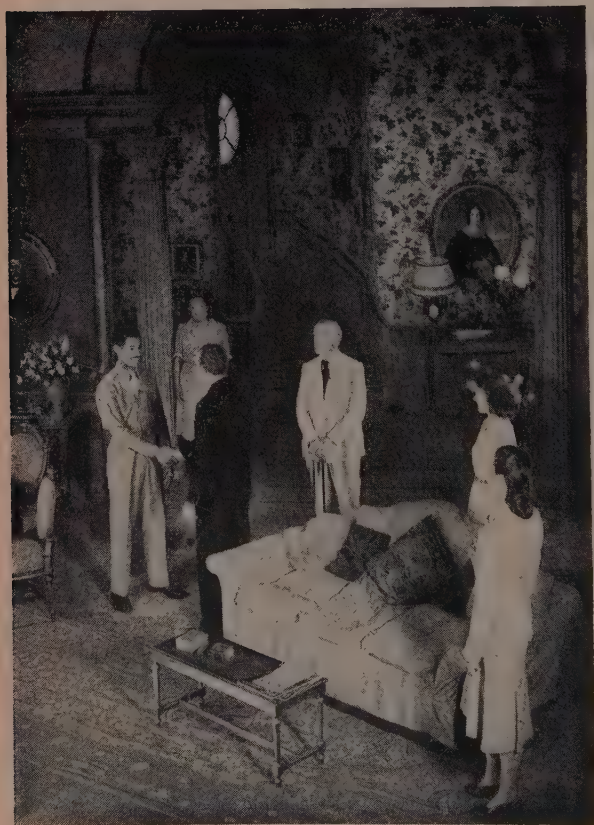
**T**HIS sincere and moving play about one of America's leading internal problems has profoundly impressed London theatre-goers. The authors, Arnaud d'Usseau and James Gow, approach the problem of the colour bar in the Southern States with a true appreciation of the medium they are using. Instinctively we are made to believe in the play's passionate convictions, and though by tradition and upbringing we over here have no first-hand knowledge of the deep rooted prejudices involved, so sure is

the authors' touch that we find ourselves living with the characters, white and coloured, and sharing their varied emotions.

The play was reviewed in our last issue when tribute was paid to the splendid acting, particularly of the members of the company who have come from America to appear at Wyndhams. Daphne Rye has directed and the decor is by Gladys Cobb.

We have no hesitation in advising theatre-goers not to miss this play, which is one of the finest to be seen in the West End.

PICTURES BY HOUSTON-ROGERS



(Top Left)

Alice: But unfortunately, Brett can't take the job.

Maxwell: I don't understand.

Alice: Why I couldn't let Brett spend his life teaching school in that grubby little shack.

Alice Langdon has ambitious ideas for the son of her father's coloured housekeeper when he returns from the war, and discusses his future with Roy Maxwell, her cousin (Alexander Gauge), an up-and-coming local politician.

(Above)

Langdon: You contemplating marrying this young man?

Alice: That's the general idea, father.

Alice announces her engagement to Howard Merrick (Patrick Barr), an author from New York.

(Left)

Howard: How do you do, Lieutenant Langdon: Brett, Mr. Merrick is from the North. He writes books.

Brett (Gordon Heath) receives a big welcome home. At the back can be seen his mother, Bella (Evelyn Ellis) and on the right Alice's younger sister, Genevra (Betsy Drake).



*Genevra* : Brett, are you glad to be home?  
 Brett and Genevra are a little shy at meeting again after the lapse of years. As children they had been brought up together and a warm bond of friendship had grown up between them.



*Honey* : Brett, honey, you're hurting me. But I like it.

*Bella* : Get out of here, you cotton picker! Trying to mess around with my son Brett. Get!

Brett repulses the advances of the new coloured maid, Honey (Helen Martin).



*Genevra* : Brett, I was thinking about something this morning. When we were children—when they said we could never play together again—how did you feel?

Brett's return has a disturbing effect on Genevra.



*Langdon*: What are they, boy? These plans . . . what are they? Are you going to start a revolution? Come on. Speak up.

*Brett*: No, sir; I don't aim to start a revolution. I just want to stay here in the South and be principal of the Negro school.

The Senator, in whom slumbers all his ancestors' deep rooted prejudice against the coloured people of the Southern States, turns on Brett when the young man gives evidence of a new independence of spirit born of his war experiences in Europe.



*Geneva*: You see how angry you've made me? My hand's shaking. And yet . . . why should I be so offended? Is it because — Well, what I mean is this, if I *did* feel that way about Brett, I honestly don't think I'd be ashamed of it.

As the days go by Howard senses that Geneva is in love with Brett. As a man from the North he does not see eye to eye with the Senator on the question of the colour bar, and as a result his relationship with Alice becomes strained.



*Honey*: Oh no, sir! No, sir. I didn't. I was . . .  
*Langdon*: Yes, you did. You found it in that nigger boy's room.

Determined that Brett shall be restrained, the Senator fakes up a charge of theft against him.



*Howard*: Alice—Alice darling, there's just **one** chance for us; just one! When the Sheriff gets here, send him away! Don't let him have Brett! I can't stand up to be married while that man's in jail!

Howard, horrified by the turn of events, threatens to break his engagement.



*Alice*: You were out with Brett.

*Genevra*: Yes. I was.

In Alice's eyes Brett has committed the unforgiveable sin when she learns through an anonymous letter that he and her young sister had been seen out walking together at night. Her attitude stiffens against the young man, and she sends for the Sheriff, knowing full well that by so doing she will lose Howard.



*Howard* : Are you trying to kill him?

The Sheriff and his men come to fetch Brett who, overwhelmed by a sense of injustice, fights desperately. After a struggle he is given a blow on the head and carried unconscious to the prison. His champion, Howard, has been powerless to help.



*Howard* : You want to atone for all the sins of the white race.' By yourself . . . alone?

*Genevra* : I want to go to him. I want to say to him "I'm sorry. I'm sorry for all these wrongs that have been done. I reject these people and all their cruelties. I'm with you . . ." Do you understand Howard?

Genevra is heartbroken when she learns of the wrong done to Brett and finds in Howard a sympathetic and wise counsellor.

*Brett: No . . . No. I don't have to kill you!  
You're not worth killing. Go on living. And  
shake with fear every time you see a black face.*

The dramatic scene when Brett, angry to his soul, confronts Alice whom he finds alone that night. Because of public opinion he had been released from jail and put on a train leaving the town, from which he had escaped. Alice is convinced that Brett intends to murder her, but instead he reveals to her the depth of her pride and selfishness. He points out that her interest in his education had derived from personal motives and that her attitude had always been a patronising one, so that at the first sign of his growing sense of independence she had determined to bend him to her will and mould him according to her pattern.



*Bella: Is my woman's body less sacred than yours? No, we ain't good enough to claim a place among the chosen people. But we're good enough to share the white man's bed. And when we do, God punishes us as He sees fit . . . but nobody calls the Sheriff.*

After Alice's encounter with Brett, Bella speaks for her son and gently tries to bring her young mistress to a sense of the injustice that has been done him. Alice, though in temperament so much like her father, is nevertheless of a more modern and tolerant outlook and at last she is made aware of the cruelty of her actions.



*Langdon* : The watch is nothing; the threat to our security everything.

*Howard* : Yes, your father is right. The watch is nothing. If it hadn't been the watch, you would have found something else, and you would have justified it.

Howard discovers from Honey, the maid, that the charge against Brett of stealing a watch was a false one and the Senator is forced to withdraw. But to the end he remains adamant in his attitude that he was right in trying to suppress Brett when he wanted to spread his new-found democratic ideas.



*Brett* : I've loved you all my life, but I didn't come back from Europe to marry you. You want the world to be different . . . it's not a very nice world, but you want it to be different—and so do I . . . but marriage is not the way.

The moving scene towards the end of the play when Brett, for the first time confessing his love, refuses to let Geneva go away with him as had been her firm intention. But the noble and self-sacrificing love which she has shown towards him restores his faith in human nature and takes away the bitterness from his soul.

## "Richard II"

In this picture, which gives an idea of the impressive decor, John Ruddock is seen as Gaunt (seated left) and Douglas Seale as York (right). Further pictures of this—one of the most successful of the season's productions—will be seen on page 23.



Picture by Germaine Kanova

# Shakespeare Festival

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON

THE 1947 Season at Stratford has upheld the promise of last year and, in addition to *Dr. Faustus*, *Measure for Measure*, *Love's Labour's Lost* and *The Tempest* which were carried over from last year, new productions of *Romeo and Juliet*, *Twelfth Night*, *Richard II*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *Pericles* have been included. In the following pages appear scenes from four of the latter, pictures of *Pericles* not yet being available. Elsewhere in this issue will also be found our critic's review of the plays not included in our June issue.

Further proof of the new spirit prevailing at Stratford was the International Shakespeare Conference which was sponsored by the University of Birmingham, The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre and the British Council. The Conference was held from August 16th until August 23rd and consisted of a series of public lectures by well-known Shakespearian scholars from all over the world. On the Sunday evening the guests attended a special performance of *Timon of Athens* by the company of the Birmingham Repertory Theatre, produced by Sir Barry Jackson, and during the week visited some six performances at the Memorial Theatre. The actors and producers of the plays had ample opportunity of exchanging views with these distinguished visitors and the event proved one of the most interesting and instructive Stratford has known.

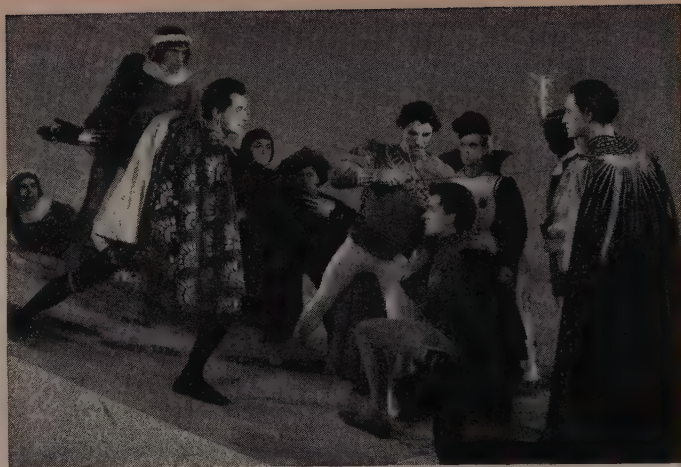
## "Romeo and Juliet"

Scenes from *Romeo and Juliet*, first performed on April 5th, with production by Peter Brook, scenery and costumes by Rolf Gerard and music by Roberto Gerhard.

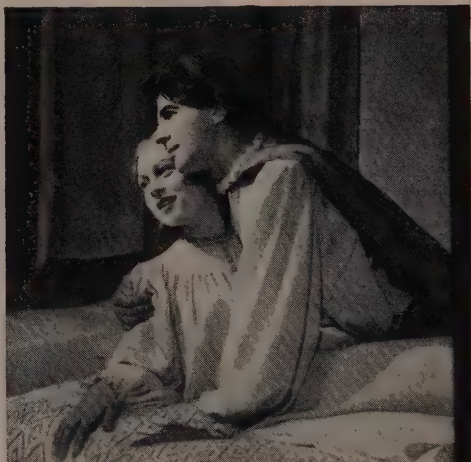
(Right) Tybalt (Myles Eason) slays Mercutio (Paul Scofield) with Romeo (Laurence Payne) centre.

Pictures by

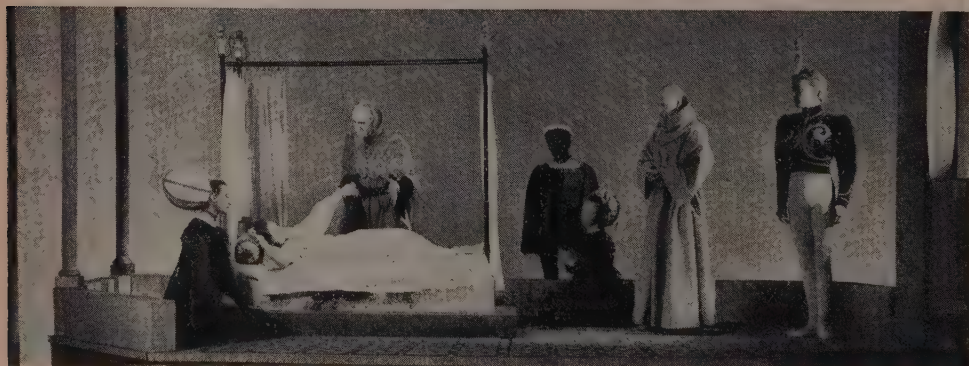
Angus McBean



Benvolio (John Harrison) and the dying Mercutio (Paul Scofield).



Laurence Payne as Romeo and Daphne Slater as Juliet.



Juliet feigns death when Paris arrives for their wedding. In the picture are Walter Hudd as Capulet, Beatrix Lehmann as The Nurse, John Ruddock as Friar Laurence and Donald Sinden as Paris.

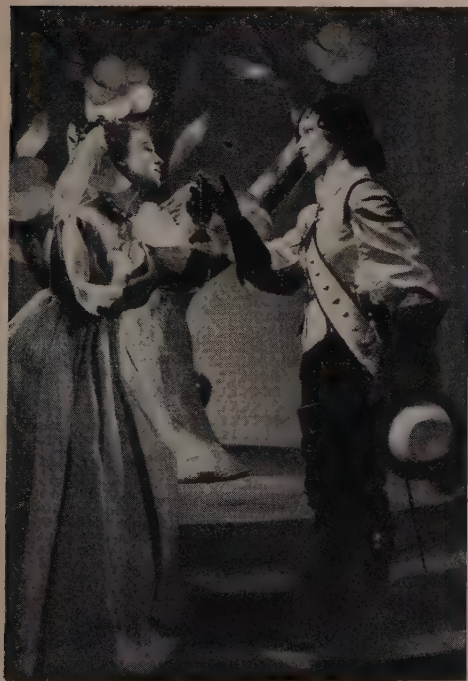


Simplicity is the keynote of the setting of this scene in Orsino's Court.

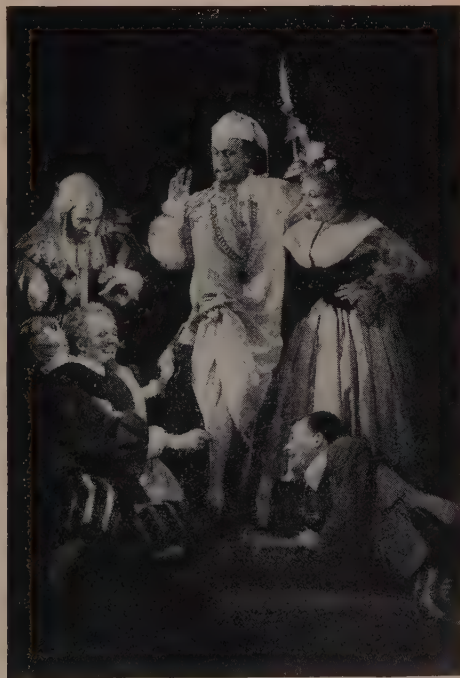
*Twelfth Night*, first produced on April 23rd, was this year's Birthday Play. The production was by Walter Hudd, Riette Sturge-Moore was responsible for the scenery and costumes and the music was by Trude and Otto Huttenbach.

## "Twelfth Night"

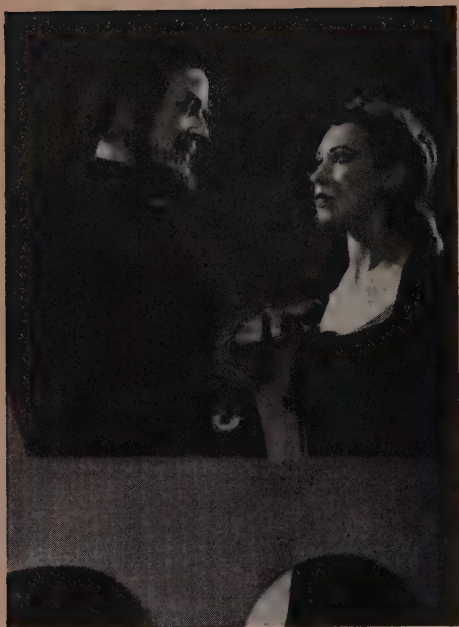
*Pictures by Angus McBean*



The meeting between Olivia (Daphne Slater) and Viola (Beatrix Lehmann), disguised as Cesario.



A merry moment from the drinking scene, with Walter Hudd as Malvolio, Paul Scofield as Sir Andrew, John Blatchley as Sir Toby, Helen Burns as Maria and Dudley Jones as Feste.



## "The Merchant of Venice"

Michael Benthall's production achieved a new angle on this oft-performed play and there were many evidences of his experience in ballet. Sophie Fedorovitch designed the scenery and costumes and Brian Easdale provided the music.

*Pictures by Angus McBean*

In the pictures above John Ruddock is seen as Shylock with Joy Parker as Jessica (left), and right is a glimpse of the colourful Masque Scene.



The Trial Scene with Beatrix Lehmann as Portia and (right) Helen Burns as Nerissa.

(Right):

A moment from Act I, Scene 1. Bolingbroke (Michael Golden) and Mowbray (Myles Eason) plead their cause before Richard Gaunt (John Rud-dock) is seen to the right of the King.



Walter Hudd's production of *Richard II* was hailed as a notable achievement and these pictures will give some idea of Hal Burton's impressive scenery and costumes. John Simons provided the music.

## "Richard II"

(Below left): Beatrix Lehmann as the Duchess of Gloucester. (Below right): Richard returns to England. A moving scene from Act III. Donald Sinden as Aumerle and Paul Stevenson as The Bishop of Carlisle.

Pictures by Germaine Kanova





**EDWARD'S FATHER** as he appears in the Prologue. We see him here at the present time, as Lord Holt, successful business man, who, somewhat troubled, though unrepentant, shows us on the stage the story of his life since 1919. (ROBERT MORLEY AS ARNOLD HOLT.)

## "Edward, My Son"

● **THIS** play by Robert Morley and Noel Langley which Henry Sherek and Gilbert Miller are presenting at His Majesty's Theatre, is one of the most compelling productions London has seen, and a triumph for Robert Morley as co-author and star of the piece.

The play, which covers the last twenty-eight years, and in ten scenes takes the audience from 1919 up to the fuel crisis of last February, tells the story of the relentless ambition and determination of a father to provide for his son every advantage that money can buy. In the process family life and friends are sacrificed by Arnold Holt, the father, and though Edward, the central pivot of the play, is never seen on the stage his presence is conveyed with such realism through the life of those about him that he emerges as a very real—if unpleasant—personality.

No praise could be too high for the acting of the brilliant company and perhaps the portraits in these pages will convey some idea of the skill with which the leading players encompass the passing of twenty-eight absorbing years. Special praise also due to Peter Ashmore who directs.



**EDWARD'S FATHER** as he was when Edward was a year old (1919); sixteen years old (1934), and twenty-three years old (1941). After starting in business as a small Estate Agent, Arnold Holt, ex-Army Captain of the first World War, becomes a powerful and ruthless industrialist controlling vast organisations and resources.



**EDWARD'S MOTHER**, as the happy mother of baby Edward, and (centre), as the fashionable wife of Lord Holt in 1934, by which time her marriage has broken down and her son's character ruined by his doting father. (Right): The unhappy Lady Holt in 1941. Her son has been killed in the war, but long before that she had lost grip and, lonely, disillusioned and dispirited, had taken to drink.

(PEGGY ASHCROFT AS EVELYN HOLT)



**EDWARD'S DOCTOR**, who has been a close friend of the Holts since Edward's babyhood. At the time when the second portrait was taken Dr. Parker, knowing of Evelyn Holt's unhappy marriage, confessed his love for her, but to no avail. As an ageing man in 1941 (right) it was his tragedy to see the woman he loved reduced to a human wreck.

(JOHN ROBINSON AS DR. "LARRY" PARKER.)



**EDWARD'S SCHOOLMASTER** at the time when Arnold Holt, determined that Edward should not be expelled, paid off the seven thousand pound mortgage on the school and forced the Headmaster to retain his son.

(D. A. CLARKE-SMITH AS MR. HANRAY.)

**EDWARD'S FATHER'S SECRETARY**, who in 1935 became Lord Holt's mistress and but for the fact that his lordship would allow no scandal to touch his son, might have married Arnold, who had more than a passing affection for this charming young lady. To that end Lord Holt blackmailed his wife about Dr. Parker to stop her taking divorce proceedings and his secretary was moved to Paris.

(LEUEEN MACGRATH AS EILEEN PERRY.)



**HOW IT ALL BEGAN.** The happy occasion of Edward's first birthday in 1919. Mr. and Mrs. Arnold Holt, Harry Soames, Holt's new business partner and later his victim, and the family doctor toast the sleeping Edward. A few years later Edward is threatened with permanent lameness, but his father, resorting to arson, acquires sufficient money to effect a cure for him by sending him to Switzerland. This was the beginning of Arnold Holt's unscrupulous climb to wealth and position.

(RICHARD CALDICOT AS HARRY SOAMES, left.)



**THE GIRL EDWARD BETRAYED.** Lord Holt, determined that nothing shall interfere with Edward's forthcoming Society wedding, exerts his most charming and persuasive manner on Betty Flower, the little tobacconist's assistant who is going to have a child by Edward. A scene from the last Act.

(PATRICIA HICKS AS BETTY FOWLER.)

# On Being a Negro Actor

By ERIC JOHNS

A WAVE of depression spoilt my evening when I last saw Paul Robeson act. In spite of a poor play the experience was so tremendous that I was haunted by the melancholy question—who will carry on after him? There seemed to be no answer. Negro actors in this country have done some very fine work, but they themselves would hardly claim to be in the Robeson class. The great man went back to America more than ten years ago. We never saw his like until one night this summer when the curtain went up on *Deep are the Roots* at Wyndham's.

By the time Gordon Heath had played his first scene I knew he was the answer to my question. Here was a Negro actor with a fine voice and a commanding stage-presence—obviously an artist capable of getting completely under the skin of any real character, and therefore not limited to the playing of Othello and the Emperor Jones. In *Deep are the Roots* his interpretation of the American Army Officer who is treated as a gentleman in Europe and a nigger at home is infinitely moving, but never overdrawn for cheap effect. Mr. Heath is too sensitive an artist, with a rare appreciation of good taste. Our theatre is richer for his visit and we hope he comes here as often as we saw Robeson in the old days.

Great actors are rare enough—great Negro actors even more so. And no wonder! It is not easy for anyone to make a living on the stage these days, but ten times more difficult for a Negro. It is something of a



GORDON HEATH

(Portrait by Denis de Marney.)

miracle that any Negro should summon sufficient courage to face the precarious life of an actor. Gordon Heath seems to be the sort of young man who refuses to take "No" for an answer, and who moves every possible barrier between himself and his ambition. London playgoers may be well pleased that he refused to be deterred and insisted upon following a career which offers little or no prospect to coloured artists.

"In America," as Mr. Heath will tell you, "apart from violent and outstanding exceptions, Negroes don't stand a reasonable chance of earning a comfortable living in the theatre, as they get no encouragement to study and practically no opportunity to use their talents, even when 'accepted' by members of the theatrical profession. Life is pretty hard going for small-part people, and even then, musical productions offer greater opportunities than the legitimate theatre. Negro singers, dancers and chorus people are in demand for musical shows to which they so often lend terrific vitality. Negro choreographers, composers and producers are rarely engaged.

"Only about 40 per cent. of the straight plays produced in a Broadway season have coloured artists in the cast, and then such parts are microscopic. Coloured maids and butlers crop up in society plays, and maybe one or two low comedians, who are badly dressed to get a laugh and badly spoken to get another laugh. Leading parts are



Walter R. Brown, Jr.

Gordon Heath as Hamlet in the closet scene from a Negro production recently seen in America.

(Continued on page 30)

# Whispers from the Wings

By  
LOOKER ON



Studio Carlet

FRANCOISE ROSAY

**F**EW English artists trouble to learn foreign languages in an attempt to win laurels in the theatres of other countries. There are exceptions, of course. Pamela Stirling has been accepted into the Comédie Française and there is some talk about Mary Morris going to play in Norwegian at Oslo's National Theatre. Many Continental artists have sufficiently mastered the English language to play leading parts on the London stage. Names that leap to mind are Bergner, Seidl, Mannheim, Leontovich, Arnaud, Delysia, Printemps, Valk, Lederer, Tauber, Brisson and Guétary.

Françoise Rosay is the latest artist to enhance her reputation by playing in Shaftesbury Avenue in our native tongue. It is a remarkable *tour de force*, but Emlyn Williams' *Trespass* fails to serve her as well as *Autumn Crocus* served Lederer or *Bless the Bride* serves Guétary. Nevertheless, it means that the art of this great actress becomes familiar to thousands who normally never go to French films. It is hoped that she will be seen at a future date

in a vehicle more worthy of her magnificent histrionic gifts.

"Playing in a foreign language," confesses Mme. Rosay, "is something of an anxiety. It brings an added strain to all the other worries that go hand in hand with the study of a part. You know where you stand in your own language and one derives confidence from playing in it. In a foreign language you cannot improvise, as you can in your own. If something untoward happens on the stage while I am playing in French I usually manage to gloss it over and no one in the audience is any the wiser. Such a situation would be ten times more difficult in a foreign language. That is one reason why playing in English is, for me, more of a strain than playing in French. Of course, the emergency may never occur!

"Another problem of playing in a foreign language is discovering the design of a sentence. It is possible to think correctly in a language, yet to speak it incorrectly. One is apt to give the wrong shape to a sentence and thus convey the wrong meaning to the audience. Playing comedy is far easier than tackling tragedy in a foreign tongue. An accent is helpful by being amusing. Both Yvonne Arnaud and Alice Delysia have exploited accents, which have charmed and amused English audiences for years. Perfectly articulated English would obviously not be welcome on the lips of these two artists. Their broken accent has been their fortune. It limits foreign artists to the playing of character parts, but a character part does not necessarily mean an elderly lady in a bonnet!

"I think the theatre is rather more widely discussed in Paris. In London people seem to be content to go to the theatre to enjoy themselves. In Paris they also go to enjoy themselves, but, in addition, they like to observe and compare. Parisians are rather more critical and look forward to active discussion in the cafes afterwards. Incidentally, I think that audiences in the English provinces laugh more easily than they do in the metropolis.

"A recently produced translation of

(Continued on page 30)

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# Echoes from Broadway

BY OUR AMERICAN CORRESPONDENT E. MAWBY GREEN

**L**AST year Brock Pemberton and Mary Chase, the producer and author respectively, of the fabulous fantasy, *Harvey*, went to England to arrange for a production of their million dollar rabbit. They returned with nothing set. Whether this was due to casting difficulties or the feeling that the time was not ripe for this play in London, we do not know; but we do know that if Mr. Pemberton decided for no *Harvey* for England this year, he was absolutely right, for no manager has watched over and taken such good care of his property as Mr. P has with *Harvey*.

Practically every night this astute entrepreneur is at the theatre and recently, as the expression goes, this paid off—but big. Screen actor James Stewart was in town and somehow only just getting around to seeing *Harvey* for the first time. He was greatly impressed and told Mr. Pemberton how fine he thought the play and what a wonderful role the happily inebriated Elwood P. Dowd was. According to the show's press agent, Mr. Pemberton then asked: "Why don't you play it sometime? You'd be great in the part."

And Mr. Stewart countered: "Can I come to talk to you about it?"

Shortly after, Mr. Stewart cleaned up his motion picture commitments and it was announced he would replace the show's star, Frank Fay, while the latter took his annual six week summer vacation. So while the other managers are bemoaning the summer heat which is bringing box office grosses to a pre-war low, Mr. Pemberton has Jimmy Stewart playing to absolute capacity every night—and only *Finian's Rainbow* is equalling that record.

Stepping into a part that two and a half years ago Frank Fay made all his own—the critics said it was one of those rare and memorable occasions where the perfect personality meets his ideal role—required courage and the good news is that Mr.



Josephine Hull and James Stewart in *Harvey*.

Stewart has acquitted himself nobly.

If Mr. Stewart's bashful boyish mannerisms and matinee appeal are not ideal for anyone playing the old fashioned Uncle Elwood P. Dowd, he has got a great personal charm and human warmth that more than counterbalances this defect and which eventually sees him bringing the play to a richer and more endearing climax than even Mr. Fay ever managed. So *Harvey* is now at its weakest in the earlier scenes,

(Continued on page 32)

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## On Being a Negro Actor (Continued)

only played by Negroes in propaganda plays, stressing racial differences, or in plays which have an all-Negro cast, with 'white' artists completely excluded. Under such conditions it is not surprising to find there is no glut of Negro actors on Broadway, where the prospect of an assured future is a thin one.

"Yet some Negroes love the theatre so passionately that they are still prepared to try and make ends meet as actors. A renaissance occurs every now and then, when a play such as *Anna Lucasta* springs up and proves once again that Negroes can act. In the Broadway production of this play Negroes played non-Negro parts. The characters were treated as a set of people and not as a contrasting collection of black and white human beings. It was the character under the skin that counted. The colour of the skin was of no consequence. *Finian's Rainbow*, which treats the colour situation in delicate and fantastic terms, and *Beggar's Holiday*, which 'white' and Negro artists produced in collaboration, are contemporary shows that point optimistically to the future.

"Such productions as *Anna Lucasta*, which is now scheduled for London, prove that a Negro can play any part that any other actor can play. In fact, he can bring a new warmth and vitality to certain classic roles that are not normally played by his race. The conception of a passionate Gertrude in a production of *Hamlet* with Negro and 'white' actors, in which I played in Virginia, caused considerable comment among the critics. Many of them saw for the first time that Gertrude, far from being a monster, had substantial human qualities.

"I try not to think of myself as a Negro actor. When considering a part I ask myself—Am I temperamentally suited to play it? And if I think I am, that is all that matters. I played *Death in Death takes a Holiday* and Professor Higgins in *Pygmalion*. I felt that I understood them and could project them effectively on the stage. So I played them. It is possible to cast Negroes for parts without calling any particular attention to their colour. The audience accepts them, as they accepted

Canada Lee playing a 'white' part in Bernger's Broadway production of *The Duchess of Malfi*.

"Audiences in London and New York don't look at Negro characters with quite the same eyes. After playing Brett in *Deep are the Roots* on Broadway and in Charing Cross Road, I am conscious of differing reactions. The two outlooks are best summed up in the phraseology used by the critics in describing the play to their readers. Nine out of ten London critics openly stated that the 'white' girl fell in love with the Negro, but the New York critics would not permit themselves so frank a statement of truth. They preferred to say that the girl had sympathy or an exaggerated affection for him. London looked upon them as two people instead of a white woman and a black man. The part of Brett is one which occurs but once in a lifetime. I feel I can hardly hope for such enormous artistic satisfaction again, especially as there happens to be a good deal in common between my philosophy of life and Brett's.

"The colour problem means so much in America, particularly in the Southern States where the Negro, to say the least, is treated with less tolerance than in the North. It would be impractical to stage *Deep are the Roots* in the South. Even if audiences came with an open mind, it would close fairly early in the play! In any case, Negroes are never seen playing significant roles on the stages of theatres in the South."

## Whispers from the Wings (Continued)

Racine's *Britannicus* in London led one critic to suggest that the Alexandrine metre in which the French classics are written is so limiting that it hampers the actors. I disagree entirely. Bernhardt and Rachel scored their greatest triumphs in the classics. Such works call for a different style of acting, just as the opera *Boris Godounov* calls for a different style from the tragedy of *Macbeth*—but both demand acting. One cannot be decried because it differs from the other. The styles vary, but the underlying feeling and emotion is the same. Strict artistic discipline is essential in the French classics, but voice and gesture are given scope to rise to great heights of dramatic expression."



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# Frinton Summer Theatre

● An interesting 1947 theatrical experiment has been the Frinton Summer Theatre modelled on the American Summer Theatres. Formed by Reginald Beckwith and Nigel Stock, the theatre began its first season of eight weeks on 28th July, with *French without Tears*, the next production being *The Gleam*. This year the policy is to present well-known revivals, but later on it is hoped to produce new plays. A permanent company of artists will remain throughout the season, who are accommodated in the town at the theatre's expense with meals provided by the theatre's restaurant. Peter Hoar of the B.B.C. is producer and his wife is in charge of these domestic arrangements. An interesting feature this season has been the Puppet matinees for children. Hitherto Frinton has had no theatre or cinema, so the Summer Theatre is likely to prove a great attraction.



The pictures show members of the company inside the theatre and rehearsing in the open air. *Top*, L. to R.: John Van Eyssen, Christine May, Peter Dyneley, Rosemary Lomax, Joyce Carey and Mrs. Peter Hoar. *Centre*: Producer Peter Hoar, left, rehearses the company, and right: Jane Foley, scene designer, puts some finishing touches to some scenery outside the forge where most of her work is done.



Pictures by H. L. Smerdon, Clacton-on-Sea

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**Echoes from Broadway** (Continued)  
the straight comedy ones where every one is shocked, astonished and bewildered to meet up with and be introduced to the invisible 6 foot 5½ inch rabbit who is the very dear friend and bosom companion to Uncle Elwood; and completely captivating in the latter half as it shifts gently into the realm of fantasy and muses over the problem of curing Elwood of his alcoholism thus removing him from his happy enchanted world and thrusting him back to our strident, realistic, every-day world. And it is a very vital problem too for the audience, for Mr. Stewart and Miss Chase make Elwood a very appealing fellow, and it is wonderful to hear the audience laugh first nervously and then happily as they are told Elwood will be permitted to go merrily on in his own woozy way.

Among the supporting players there are still some members of the original cast and for once this strikes us as not being all for the good. They seem to be taking the invisible rabbit a little too much for granted and this undoubtedly is one of the contributing reasons to the new vulnerability of the first act and a half. The exception to this, of course, is the inimitable Josephine Hull who plays Elwood's harassed sister, Veta. She is just as fresh and sparkling as she ever was, and we do not mean to steal any glory from Mr. Stewart and Mr. Fay when we say that she is contributing one of the finest comic pieces of nonsense we have ever seen.

The competition to acquire the film rights to *Harvey* ended recently when Universal-International was declared the winner in a cool million dollar deal. This colossal piece of change marks the highest price ever paid by the movies for a stage play, but we also rush to add that *Oklahoma!* still has to make its "piece" with the picture biggies and for which sensational stage-breaker Hollywood will be required to gush plenty.

In returning to the legit to appear in *Harvey*, it is common belief that Mr. Stewart is using this fanfare as a beacon to more or less keep his name out front when the selection is made for the screen's Elwood P. Dowd. Rumour persists at present, however, that William Powell will pluck this much sought after plum. But, be this as it may, there is no denying that Jimmy Stewart's exciting presence and performance has been Mr. Pemberton's and Broadway's gain.

# RAM GOPAL

C. B. Cochran and Anthony Vivian will present Ram Gopal and his Hindu Ballet for a series of matinées at the Adelphi Theatre, commencing 12th November. Since last appearing in London, Mr. Gopal has gathered a large company of dancers around him.

**"Pericles"—"Richard II"—  
"The Merchant of Venice"**

**P**ERICLES is this year's rarity at Stratford: it was last performed there almost fifty years ago, when Lilian Braithwaite played Marina. The omission is strange, for some passages at least are starred with magic—that later magic of Shakespeare that produced Perdita and Miranda (Marina is of the same quality) and, returning to the pastoral images of the poet's youth, seems to drench the fairy tale with the scent of flowers.

Perhaps it was Shakespeare's own daughter Judith, growing into womanhood, who inspired these 'radiant and tender portraits in the later romances. At least there is a new light here, after the turbulent dark of the tempest that produced *King Lear*, *Timon* and the so-called comedy *Measure for Measure*. Some residue of that mental cloud remains in the brothel scenes of *Pericles*: but even here Marina, like a white diamond, glows unsullied in the impure setting.

The early episodes of the play, loosely strung together by the storyteller Gower, are dramatically thin and the characters' actions and motives ill-explained throughout. The present production of Nugent Monck wisely omits the irrelevant and dubious first Act but it does not succeed in hiding the disjointedness of the tale. Although colours and lighting are attractive the mixture of periods is bewildering and the grouping poor. The production is, however, redeemed by the royal and moving *Pericles* of Paul Scofield, a young actor who magnificently sustains his last year's promise, and the flower-like Marina of Daphne Slater. I have not at the time of writing seen her Juliet, but probably it tried her too high. Hers is a delicate talent, that needs nurturing, and as Marina she has a quality of waxy enchantment. The scene of recognition was exquisitely acted by both players, Scofield here displaying the type of sensitivity and heartache Gielgud brought to the not dissimilar reunion with Cordelia in *King Lear*. A brilliant and amusing sketch of a "spiv" by John Blatchley in the brothel scene was the best of the remaining performances.

*Richard II* and *The Merchant of Venice* are two other plays produced late in the season. With regard to the first I find myself in total disagreement with most critics. Walter Hudd's production, apart from some beautiful pictorial fragments in Gothic cathedral style, seemed to me slow, ponderous and old-fashioned, with too many scenes played in darkness or in front of a drop curtain. It was an astonishing dramatic error to confine *Richard's* great

(Continued on page 36)

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## Amateur Stage

TO what extent has the war-time enthusi-  
asm of the Forces for amateur variety  
or revue work carried over to civilian life?  
Are musical societies, confronted with a  
dearth of suitable new musical plays from  
the professional stage, thinking in terms of  
a variety bill or revue as an alternative to  
repeating the old favourites?

These questions arise from the publication  
of a new book which is aimed directly at  
the groups of amateurs who are interested  
in revue, concert party, or music hall. In  
that sense, the author, D. Roy Mills, has no  
doubt of the readers he is addressing, and  
he writes with the enthusiasm of one with  
warm memories of his concert party days  
in the Forces.

*Run Your Own Show* (Rockliff, 8/6) is a  
simple technical guide for the amateur  
producer-organiser of such shows. It covers  
the whole bill, back stage and front, with  
some of its best writing on nursing and  
coaxing latent talent among the artists.  
Constructing a programme for an evening's  
concert party entertainment is a matter for  
contrast in turn, personality and technical  
accomplishment in the performer, and  
general slickness in production. All of this  
is emphasised by Mr. Mills, and it is an  
interesting and commendable point that the  
value and importance of the band is  
stressed. Four instrumentalists are advised,  
pianist, drummer, saxophonist and violinist,  
a good combination. One has often heard  
the solitary pianist at amateur revues and  
concert parties, and the effect usually was  
a feeling that stronger support would have  
made all the difference.

Generally, this book is confidence inspiring  
to the amateurs who like the revue form,  
and are looking for guidance on the snags  
and pitfalls. It is handsomely produced,  
and its niche is a sure one on the amateur's  
bookshelf.

\* \* \*

The Arts Club, Sheffield, has launched  
a one-act play competition, closing  
30th November next, with a prize of five  
guineas and production. Details from Miss  
F. E. Ward, Storth Lodge, Moorwoods  
Lane, Owlver Bar, Sheffield, 11.

Ten members of the "Penrith Players,"  
25-year-old Cumberland society, took part  
in James Gregson's adaptation of the late  
Sir Hugh Walpole's *Rogue Herries* recently  
broadcast in three "tiers" on the Home  
Service.

The Questors, Ealing, announce a student  
training course of one year's duration,  
divided into three terms, commencing  
6th September next.

Dame Sybil Thorndike awarded first prize  
in Sussex Playwrights' Club one-act play  
competition to Mabel Tyrrell and Peter Coke

for *Beware of Yesterday*. There were 33 entries.

Mr. H. Brierley, J.P., of Burnley, is nominated for re-election as President of the National Operatic and Dramatic Association at the annual general meeting and conference to be held at the Royal Hotel, Scarborough, on October 3rd to 5th.

Streatham Dramatic Club's forthcoming programme includes: *Mystery at Green-fingers*, *The Young Mrs. Barrington*, and *Fools Rush In*. The Club has also entered for the Addiscombe Drama Festival with Philip Johnson's *The Distant Drum*. There are still vacancies for experienced males and communications should be addressed to the Director, Peter Boyd Cox, 14 Culverhay, Ashted, Surrey.

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## THE CHILTERN HUNDREDS

by Douglas Home

Produced by Colin Chandler

Mompert scene to the extreme side of the stage before a curtain. The acting also seemed below previous years' standard at Stratford. Robert Harris' Richard was authoritative and well-spoken, but out of character. One received an impression of resolution and strength, and missed the "rash fierce blaze of riot," the instability, the variety and poetry and impotent grief

There is nothing old-fashioned about Michael Benthall's production of *The Merchant of Venice*: it goes in fact to the other extreme, and tends to swamp Shakespeare's text in ballet-attitudinising and fantasciation. This is a pity since Sophie Fedorovitch's costumes and expressionistic permanent set are beautiful and could, without embellishment, have allowed for a picturesque, swift and perfectly acceptable production of the play. Benthall uses his lighting imaginatively but allows his actors to throw away their lines. Many are inaudible or monotonous of speech. The play is also miscast as regards Shylock and Portia (John Ruddock and Beatrix Lehmann) and as the male acting generally this year is weak the virility and intelligence of Laurence Payne's Italianate Bassanio is doubly welcome. Walter Hudd is a grave and dignified Antonio and Joy Parker's Jessica as charming as her Ariel.

## COMPANY MEETING

### DUFAY-CHROMEX LIMITED

At Meeting of Dufay-Chromex Limited held at Chartered Insurance Institute, 20 Aldermanbury, EC2, the Chairman, Sir Herbert Morgan, said:

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Discussions are taking place between Company and I.C.I., which, if they mature, should prove of lasting benefit to the development of the Company.

I cannot conclude my remarks without acknowledging great debt owed to your Managing Director, Mr Demetre Daponte, who applies himself with such capacity, resourcefulness and energy to the development and prosperity of the Company.

Sir P. Malcolm Stewart moved a vote of thanks, which was carried by acclamation.

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